

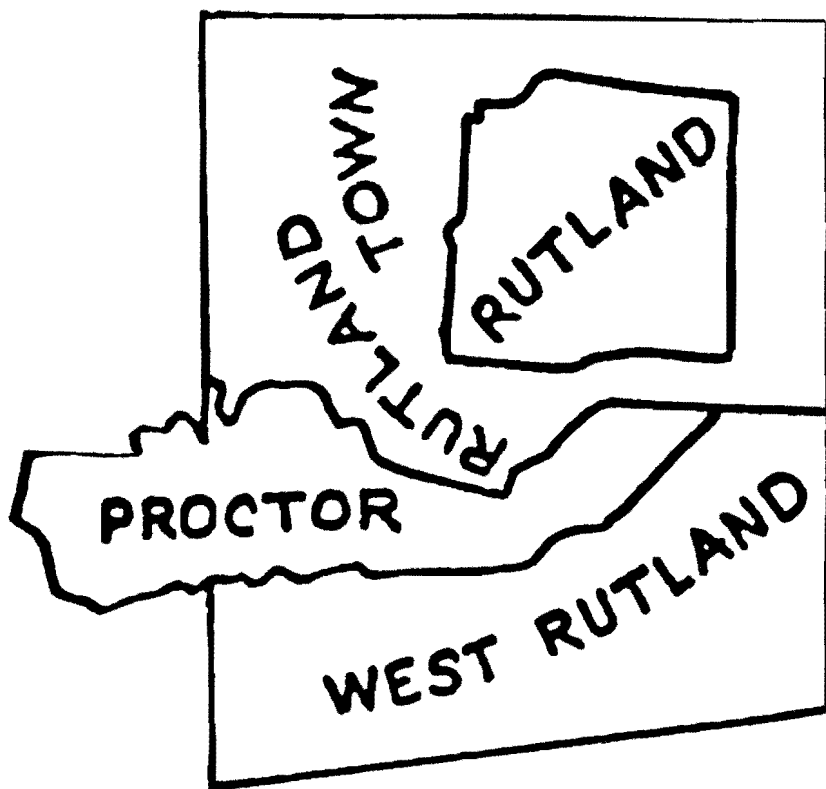
# RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *Quarterly*

VOLUME IX No. 3

SUMMER 1979

*10th Anniversary Issue*



The area of historical interest to the Society comprises present day West Rutland, Proctor, Rutland Town and Rutland City. Originally this area was chartered in 1761 by Benning Wentworth, governor of the Province of New Hampshire and was known simply as Rutland. The area comprised nearly thirty-six square miles.

### RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENTS

Frederic P. Elwert	1969-1970	Archibald J. Todd	1974-1977
James S. Davidson	1970-1972	Robert E. West	1977-1979
Frederic P. Elwert	1972-1974	Sanborn Partridge	1979-1980

# GENESIS OF AN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## **The Tradition**

A recipe for a successful historical society involves many ingredients. They might be listed, not necessarily in order of importance, as historical tradition, an interest in that tradition and an intense desire of a small minority to work hard.

Even before the town was settled, Rutland was unique in that two of its grantees were women who received a share in the town as partial compensation for the sufferings they had endured as captives of the Indians during the French and Indian war.

The principal grantee of Rutland, Vermont, was John Murray, a prominent land speculator of Rutland, Massachusetts, who probably gave the New Hampshire Grant town its name. A notable Murray memorabilia is a silver tea service made for his wife by Paul Revere. This tea set is incorporated in John Singleton Copley's portrait of Revere and is now owned by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

The earliest of a long line of Rutland men who distinguished themselves in politics was John Bowker, chairman of the Conventions of the New Hampshire Grants. He was followed by eleven Rutland men who served as chief executive of the state. During the federal period the Reverends Samuel Williams and Lemuel Haynes achieved fame beyond the borders of Vermont, the former as a publisher and historian and the latter as a staunch defender of the Congregational faith. To a long list of prominent families, such as the Ripleys and the Clements, and individuals, such as Julia Dorr, Walter Colton and William Henry Jackson, can be added dozens of names of men and women who contributed to the history of the nation.

## **Historians**

Rutland did not lack for historians. In addition to the Rev. Samuel Williams (the first history of Vermont came from his pen) there were Chauncey K. Williams (a grandson) and Henry Hall. Although these men researched the history of Rutland, their efforts did not include the collection of artifacts. The idea of an historical society was a concept whose time had not yet come.

## **The Beginnings of a Society**

The first public awareness of Rutland's past was in 1870 when a celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the first settlement of Rutland took place. This event was highlighted by a large and varied exhibit of hundreds of artifacts and souvenirs donated or loaned for the occasion. Chauncey Williams compiled a book for the event which included a detailed list of the exhibits.

The second historical stirrings occurred in 1881 in observance of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Rutland County. A county-wide historical society was organized and continued to function for several years. Two volumes of "Proceedings" were published with emphasis on military and genealogical matters.

In the 1940s a faint attempt at founding a society did not survive the organizational meeting. A well-planned observance of the two hundredth anniversary of the chartering of the Town of Rutland was organized by the Chamber of Commerce in 1961. Few communities in the state had as varied and interesting an observance. Meldon School, then located on what was to be the site of the Koltonski Fire Station, was crammed with exhibits of farm and blacksmith tools during the summer of 1961. The adjacent Main Street Park was the scene of the Bicentennial Village where a sugar house, blacksmith shop and country store steadily drew visitors all summer. Despite the fever pitch of the organizational efforts no historical society emerged.

## **Efforts of Julia C.R. Dorr**

In the 1880s, after several unsuccessful attempts, a free public library was organized. The spark of interest in things historical and cultural which had been kindled for years in the community was fanned into a steady flame by Julia C.R. Dorr. An inspiring organizer, Mrs. Dorr marshalled the clubwomen of the community, raised funds, secured quarters and hired help to provide the circulation of books free of charge. For years this library and the G.A.R. Memorial Hall, in which it was located, were the guardians of Rutland's historical acquisitions.

## **Efforts of Berenice Tuttle**

Almost four generations later a group from the Rutland Woman's Club, headed by Berenice Tuttle, accepted the challenge of forming an historical society. In the late 1960s the presidency of this club was placed in the firm hands of this successful businesswoman. Although confined to a wheelchair in her later years, Miss Tuttle actively continued her interest in civic affairs. A modest news item and a letter to the editor of the **Rutland Herald** announced the formulation of a community improvement project. A meeting of all interested persons was called for 7:30 on Wednesday, August 6, 1969. Mrs. Bennett Bell, vice president of the Rutland Woman's Club, hosted the meeting at her home at 8 Billings Avenue. At no time was the name of the Woman's Club mentioned. Several low-key presentations were made on the scope and purpose of an historical society. Names and addresses of those attending were recorded, tentative committee assignments were made, and candidates needed for the various offices were selected.

## **The Birth of the Rutland Historical Society**

The Rutland Historical Society was officially incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Vermont on August 19, 1969. On September 10, 1969, a public meeting at the Rutland Free Library approved a constitution for the Society. The Society was now an entity.

## **Search for a Home**

A concern almost as important as the existence of the Society itself was the need for a home where artifacts and books could be stored and displayed. The new organization was certain to have at least one memento of Rutland's past, for during the month of August Harold J. Nichols, mayor of Rutland (1965-71), had received a pennant from Admiral Alexander S. Witherspoon, Retired Commander of the Transport Squadron 47. The USS Rutland was the command ship of the squadron. This pennant had flown from the USS Rutland throughout the campaign in the Pacific during World War II. The mayor had expressed a desire to turn the pennant over to a local historical society.

The job of finding a home began with a petition to the Board of Aldermen for the use of the Nickwackett Fire Station. Several months previously the Senior Citizens had asked for this building but had been turned down since the Fire Department used the place as a storeroom. The Society fared no better.

At about this time one of the city's least known buildings came on the real estate market. It was the small brick church of the Seventh-day Adventists at 101 Center Street. The building, the original Bank of Rutland, had been built in 1825, but it was situated so far back from Center Street and was so effectively hidden by two enormous honeysuckle bushes that few people were aware of its existence. At the request of the Society the City purchased the church. The Society had at last found a home.

## **FINALLY A DREAM NEARS FRUITION**

*from RUTLAND DAILY HERALD Friday, October 7, 1870 (Vol. 10, No. 135) p. 3.*

### **A Need in Rutland**

Editor Rutland Herald: — During our recent and successful Centennial Celebration it has occurred to the writer, and doubtless to others, that we need in this town a good fire-proof building in which to deposit whatever relics and curiosities may seek such a place for security against loss, and there to remain open to public inspection as mementoes of the fruitful past. Historical and antiquarian rooms are becoming marked features of our best regulated towns and cities. The historical rooms at Hartford, Conn., teem with interesting relics, and are visited by many from far and near, and new contributions are constantly added.

While we may not hope to rival such a collection, the great gathering of curiosities and relics during our Centennial shows that we are not destitute of means to make a respectable show in this respect should more or less of the owners choose to place them in such a custody, and as years roll on they will accumulate and increase in interest, and many sons and daughters of Rutland County, scattered over the globe, will be glad when occasion offers to contribute to such a collection. W. C.

# CHRONOLOGY

## Rutland Historical Society

### 1969

- August 6 Organizational meeting; home of Mrs. Bennett Bell, 8 Billings Avenue, Rutland, Vermont.
- September 10 Public meeting, Rutland Free Library; by-laws adopted.
- October 7 Charles Borst's Association with the Charles E. Tuttle Company. Speaker: F. P. Elwert at Nourse Hall, Trinity Episcopal Church.
- November 17 First annual election of officers and directors, CVPS meeting room. Judge Milford K. Smith, speaker: "Vermont Indians and Artifacts."

### 1970

- April 22 Development of Skiing in Vermont: Joe Jones, speaker, at CVPS meeting room.
- October 15 Second Annual Meeting, Grace Congregational Church, UCC parlors. Early American Currency: Eugene R. Kosche, assistant curator, Bennington Museum, speaker. Mr. Kosche also showed slides on reconditioned early automobiles.
- October First issue: Rutland Historical Society Newsletter.
- November 5 Executive Board authorized membership in American Association for State and National History.
- November 19 Early Silversmiths in Rutland: Lillian Baker Carlisle of Burlington, speaker, and author of **Vermont Clocks and Watch Makers**. Door prize of Mrs. Carlisle's book given. Meeting held at Grace Congregational Church, UCC parlors.

### 1971

- January 28 Rutland and the Catholic Churches; Rev. Patrick T. Hannon, speaker. Meeting held at CVPS meeting room.
- April 25 Rutland Railroads; Jim Shaughnessy, speaker, at College of St. Joseph the Provider. Exhibits and media presentations.
- September 3 City of Rutland purchased Seventh Day Adventist Church for use by Rutland Historical Society as meeting place and museum.
- November Third Annual Meeting at CVPS. Program furnished by Mrs. Jean Schramm of Enchanted Doll House in Manchester. Exhibition and talk on the World of Toys.

### 1972

- January 25 Genealogical Facts: Mrs. Alton Swan.
- April 12 Israel Smith, Governor of Vermont, 1807-1808. Slide presentation and talk by Robert W. Gunshannon of Suffield, Conn., at CVPS meeting room.
- April 22-23 Museum workshop at CSJP and at new museum. Consultant: John von Daacke, supervising planner of new New York State Museum, Albany, N.Y.
- May 24 James Hope and his paintings. Slides and talk by David S. Brooke, director of Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, N.H. Exhibition of some locally owned Hope paintings.
- August 20 Formal opening of Rutland Historical Society museum, 101 Center St. Guest of honor: U.S. Senator Robert T. Stafford. Exhibits illustrated various uses of the building during its life.
- October 25 Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society at museum.

### 1973

- January 10 Wagner parlor cars; development of sleeping cars. Slides and talk by Francis Poulin, Schenectady, N.Y. Meeting held at museum.
- March 17 Rutland's oldest houses in Main St. area. Presentation made by Historic Sites Committee of the Society.
- June 23 First walking tour.
- July 28 Bus trip to Sturbridge Village, Mass.
- October 24 Fifth Annual Meeting, West Rutland Library. Program presented by Rev. Olaf Johnson on development of the Congregational Church in New England.

### 1974

- February 10 The Morgan Horse, pictures and stamps. Speaker: Thomas B. McDevitt, at museum.
- September 1 Rutland Historical Society opens Farm Museum at Vermont State Fair at Rutland Fairgrounds.
- October 9 Sixth Annual Meeting, Sharp Offset Printing Co. with tour and exhibit of early Vermont printing; film on printing a Renaissance book by Frank Teagle, Jr., a trustee of Vermont Historical Society.
- December 15 Old phonographs and records. Speaker: Lyle Rice at Immaculate Heart of Mary Meeting Hall.

### 1975

- January 15 Old Bottles: Norman E. Favor, speaker. Meeting held at CSJP.
- February 28 Old Tools: Speaker, A. G. Ridlon and D. Korngiebel at CSJP.
- April 1 Two Hundred Years of County History with C. Gallagher, speaker at Rutland Court House.
- June 14 Trip to Concord, Mass. Guest of Mrs. Raymond Emerson.
- October 5 Annual Meeting at Rutland Court House. Speaker: Dr. Samuel Engle Burr talking on Aaron Burr in New England.
- October 29 Lloyd Marsh speaking on Nineteenth Century Architecture and the Country Builder.

### 1976

- January 14 Hypotenuse to History: pictures shown by Thomas Egan at Rutland Library Nella Grimm Fox Room.
- February 26 Land and Money in Early Vermont. Speaker: Senator Sanborn Partridge at Rutland Library Fox Room.
- March 23 Ticonderoga and Vermont Revolutionary History. Speaker: Dr. H. N. Muller, III, at Fox Room, Rutland Library.
- August 20 Two Hundred Years Ago in California. Speaker: Henry Panian, Rutland Library.
- October 6 Eighth Annual Meeting at Rutland County Court House. Dean Fausett spoke on early Vermont history. Display of six of Mr. Fausett's large paintings, including one of Grandma Moses.
- October 8-11 Walking tour of old Rutland village.
- November 17 Old Stencilled Walls in Vermont. Speaker: Jessica Bond at Rutland Library.
- November 23 Puritan Gravestone Art. Mr. William Alsop, speaker.

### 1977

- February 23 Vermont Ancient Celtic Sites. Speaker: Dr. Warren Cook, slide presentation.
- March 22 Public showing of 1914 film of Rutland; also Bicentennial film "Where Do We Go from Here." Presentation repeated in May due to popular demand.
- June 4 Architectural exhibit at Chaffee Gallery in conjunction with Mid-Vermont artists.
- October 17 Ninth Annual Meeting at Rutland Library Fox Room, Dr. Samuel Hand speaking on Vermont Assistant Judges.

- November 18 Wood, Coal or Nuclear for Vermont. Speaker: James E. Griffin at CSJP.  
 December 7 Beth Bowers at Rutland Library showing slides and describing Selleck Archeological Excavation.

#### 1978

- February 22 Battle of Bennington. Speaker: Eugene Kosche at Rutland Library.  
 April 19 Vermont Gravestone Art, with William Harding, speaker.  
 June 15 House tour.  
 June 19 Military History of Rutland County. Presented by Wes Radcliff, Sharon Merrill and Roy Curtis at Rutland Library.  
 October 19 Annual Meeting, Fox Room, Rutland Library. Michael Barbieri in charge of program on Whitcomb Rangers.  
 November 15 "No Faster Than a Walk" . . . film on Vermont covered bridges at Fox Room.

#### 1979

- January 15 Vermont Colonial Money. Speaker, Senator Sanborn Partridge in Fox Room.  
 February 22 Early Vermont Blast Furnaces. Speaker: Victor Rolando at Fox Room.  
 March 21 Fiber of Vermont. Slide-tape history of Vermont. 1914, 1919 movies of Rutland; slide-tape of Rutland Hospital at Rutland High School Auditorium.  
 May 22 A 1663 Indian Village on the Connecticut River. Speaker: Peter Thomas at Fox Room.  
 June 23, 1979 House tour . . . Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mead family home, West Proctor Road.

The Directors and Officers of the Rutland Historical Society  
 invite you to the formal opening of the Society's new museum  
 in the former Bank of Rutland building  
 at 101 Center St., Rutland, Vt., August 20, 1972 at 3:30.

United States Senator Robert T. Stafford  
 will honor us with his presence.

After the ceremonies and a tour of the museum you  
 will have the opportunity to meet Senator Stafford  
 at a reception in the museum.

The Rutland Historical Society - serving the communities of  
 Proctor, West Rutland, Rutland Town and the City of Rutland.

Invitation to formal opening of society's new museum.

At the official opening of the museum Napoleon Lamar, Society treasurer, and Senator Stafford examine the Bank of Rutland exhibit in the Museum. The museum was built in 1825 to house the Bank of Rutland.



Honorable Robert T. Stafford, United States Senator, was keynote speaker at official opening of the museum at 101 Center Street on August 19, 1972.

## RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY TODAY

Few of those present at the organizational meeting of the Rutland Historical Society ten years ago on that hot August day, the sixth, 1969, could have foreseen the accomplishments which have occurred during this short period of time. One of the most remarkable of these accomplishments has been the growth of the Society from the 40 members at that meeting to a present membership of 500. A key factor in this growth was the early decision to obtain a building to serve as an historical museum and as a focus for the Society's activities. After a number of buildings were considered, the former 150-year-old Bank of Rutland and former Seventh Day Adventist Church was purchased by the City of Rutland. Under a mutually beneficial agreement the Society decided to maintain an historical museum in exchange for the use of the building. Without the museum, it is doubtful that the Society would have grown as rapidly as it has in only ten years.

Initially, museum exhibits were open to the public only weekends with the assistance of volunteers. More recently, it has been possible to have the museum open throughout the summer, but the greatest need of the Society has been for a full-time curator, who could properly maintain the Society's increasingly expanding collections and keep the museum open throughout the year. A great variety of exhibits based on Rutland people and events has attracted thousands of people to the museum, with the result that many of these people have become active members.

The second major factor in the growth of the Society has been the publication of the Rutland Historical Society Quarterly. From its beginnings as a newsletter to its present format as a scholarly quarterly devoted to the history of the Rutland area, the Quarterly has been edited by a number of able, dedicated editors. Some issues, such as those relating to Julia C. R. Dorr, Rutland architecture, and Benjamin Whitcomb's Rangers, have been notable. As the Society enters its second decade, the editors of the Quarterly are continually striving to improve its quality and thereby to increase membership. The third major factor of the Society has been public lectures on Rutland and other historical subjects. Initially held in the museum and other small halls, these monthly talks now attract members and large numbers of the public at the Free Library's Fox Room.

A variety of other projects has been fostered by dedicated members of the Society. The Rutland Historical Society Farm Museum now occupies the two former cattle buildings at the Vermont State Fair and is hosted by volunteers during the Fair each year and on other public occasions at the Fairgrounds.

Walking tours of Rutland have been developed over the years; the first one was expanded to four additional ones and described in the Quarterly (V1: 4 Fall 1976) devoted to Rutland architecture. Two house tours of interesting Rutland homes have been held, and during this previous summer a reception was hosted at the Mead homestead on the West Proctor Road.

The most recent significant publication of the Society, **Rutland in Retrospect**, a pictorial history of Rutland, was inspired by the national and state bicentennial celebrations. Public demand for this book exceeded all expectations. The first printing of 1,000 was quickly sold out. Additional printings were immediately required.

In connection with the preparation of this book, two films made in Rutland in 1914 and 1919 were discovered, restored, and shown to huge audiences anxious to see Rutland as it actually appeared at what now seems a distant time. The growth of the Society has fostered financial support from the community and from various grant sources to fund preparation of the book and restoration of these films.

All of these activities have led to the burgeoning collections and growth of the research library of the Society. With the increasing awareness of the Society as a major educational and cultural resource, numbers of people have donated many valuable items to the historical collections. These carefully accessioned and stored items are the major resource for the continually improving museum exhibits. The donation of books, pamphlets and other written materials relating to Rutland history has created what is probably the best library for Rutland research in existence. More work needs to be done to improve the cataloging, indexing, and general accessibility of this important research library, but this is one of the challenges remaining for the second decade.



Because the Society has continued to grow, and the collections and library along with it, it now needs larger quarters. As a stop-gap measure the City is providing the second floor of the historic Nickwackett Fire Station as a storage area for some of the Society's collections, so that there will be sufficient space in the museum for the research library and so that all of the increasing collections can be stored properly.

During the second decade the Society faces the need of a much more spacious building for the museum, library and collections. In the event that the City Recreation Department is successful in obtaining more suitable quarters for its activities, it is hoped that the Society may be able to obtain the Lawrence Recreation Center building for the museum and library. The Recreation Center was, coincidentally, the second home of the Bank of Rutland. (Ironically, the present home of the Society was the first home of the Bank of Rutland.)

The Rutland Historical Society has seen tremendous growth in its first decade. The museum, the Quarterly, the public lectures, and all the other activities supported by dedicated volunteers have been responsible for this growth. So many people have contributed so much to the Society that it is impossible to acknowledge only a few as responsible for the Society's success. While it is distressing to think what the extent of the Society's collections now might be if only other people had started the Society decades ago, that thought should imbue all with the desire to increase efforts in the Society's second decade to preserve Rutland's rich heritage and provide the public access to it.

Robert E. West

### **RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR**

**Saturday, June 18, 1977**

**10 A.M. - 4 P.M. - \$3.00**

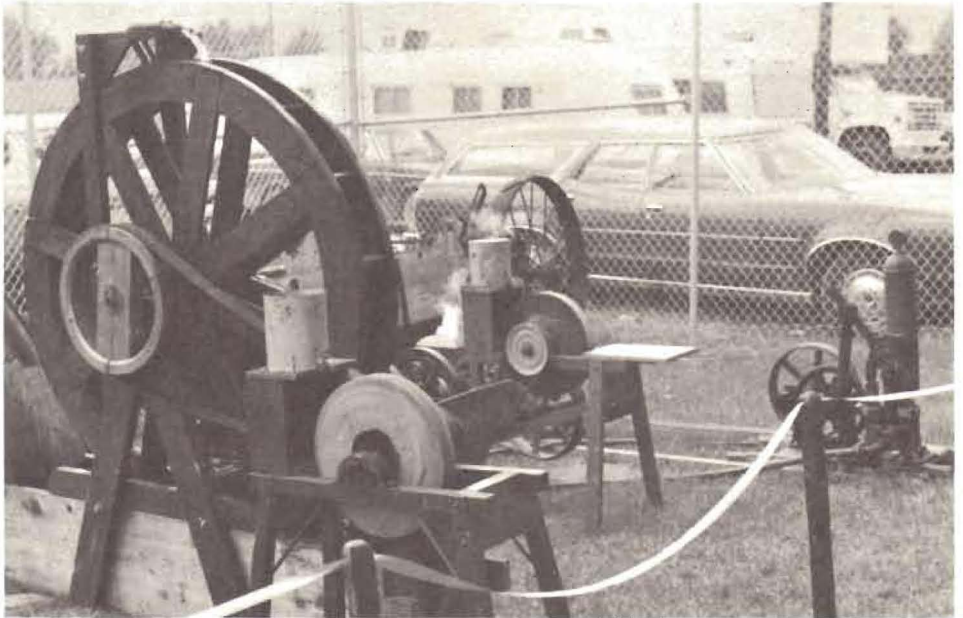
1. Rutland Historical Society Museum  
101 Center St.
2. Arthur E. Crowley, Jr. Law Offices  
27 S. Main St.
3. Dr. & Mrs. Battista Chiolino  
64 N. Main St.
4. Carl O. Anderson Law Offices  
26 West St.
5. Parlor, Grace Congregational  
United Church of Christ,  
Court St.
6. College of St. Joseph the Provider  
Fontbonne Hall, Clement Road
7. Mrs. Florence Mead Home  
West Proctor Road
8. William B. Franke Home  
1 Shadow Lane
9. Mr. & Mrs. Payson R. Webber  
240 N. Grove St.

In the fall of 1970 the Rutland Historical Society marked its second year of existence by initiating an eight-page Newsletter to serve as a vehicle to broadcast the history of the Rutland area in text and picture and to communicate with members. The Newsletter started by distributing three issues per year. However, with Volume III the Newsletter became a quarterly publication and with Number 4 became the Rutland Historical Society Quarterly.

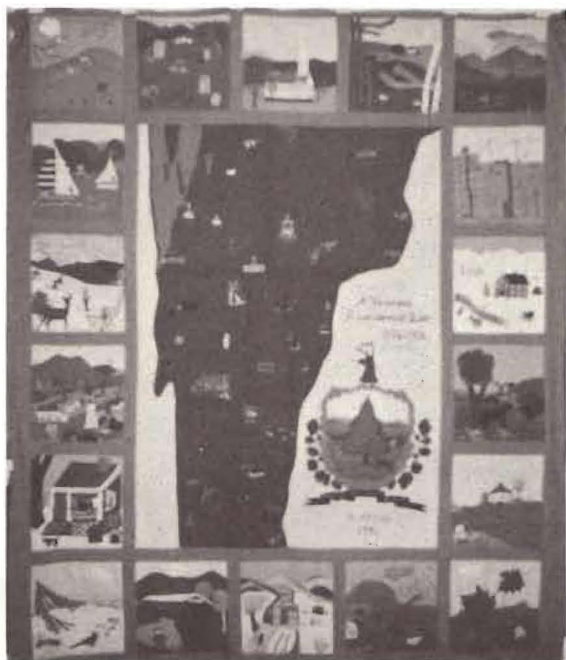
In the fall of 1976, the Rutland Historical Society published a guide to the architecture of the Rutland community. The response from the community was so positive that in the spring of the next year a more formal house tour program was organized.



One of the major contributions of the society was the publication in December, 1978 of the book **Rutland in Retrospect**. The book soon went into a second printing. The production of the book involved many members of the Society and the community in a joint production.



Farm power equipment took many forms over the years. The Rutland Historical Society Farm Museum at the Rutland Fair offers a broad collection of farm tools. Farm Museum is open daily during Fair Week.



One of the many quilts exhibited at the museum during the Bicentennial, a project sponsored in the making by Home Demonstration Clubs in Vermont. This quilt with its map of Vermont and state seal was made by women in Manchester, Vermont.



Part of an exhibit of wedding gowns covering a century from 1850 to the 1950s and worn by women of the Rutland area.

**RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
101 CENTER STREET, RUTLAND, VERMONT  
(802) 775-2006**

The society publishes the *Quarterly* for its members with the aim of preserving and studying the history of the Rutland community, which is comprised of the Towns of Rutland, Proctor and West Rutland and the City of Rutland. The Society maintains and operates a museum at 101 Center Street, Rutland, in the former Bank of Rutland building (built in 1825), now owned by the City of Rutland and leased to the Society at no charge.

***Membership***

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of dues to the Treasurer—  
John Diodati, 16 Cottage Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701

Dues are \$3.00 per year for regular members; for those wishing to give the Society further support, a contributing membership is \$10.00; a business membership is \$25.00; a sustaining membership is \$100.00; and a life membership (one payment only) is \$75.00.

All members receive as part of their membership four issues of the *Quarterly*. The expiration date of each membership is listed on the mailing label of the publication. Members wishing to pay two or more years' dues in advance are encouraged to do so to reduce costs.

Manuscripts are invited; address correspondence to the Editor.

Gifts or bequests of money or articles of local historical interest are welcome at all times and are deductible for income tax purposes.

***Editor: Michael L. Austin  
Managing Editor: Jean C. Ross***

**RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
101 Center Street  
Rutland, Vermont 05701

*The number or letter on the address label indicates your dues status:*  
*79 one year in arrears      80 current      L life membership*

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